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(54) METHOD OF TREATING POLYAMIDE MEMBRANES TO INCREASE FLUX

METHODE ZUR BEHANDLUNG VON POLYAMIDMEMBRANEN UM DEN FLUSS ZU ERHÖHEN

PROCEDE DE TRAITEMENT DE MEMBRANES POLYAMIDES POUR ACCROITRE LE DEBIT

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Description

[0001] This invention relates to a method of treating polyamide composite membranes with amines to increase the flux or flow rate through the membranes in a filtration operation.

[0002] Reverse osmosis or nanofiltration membranes are used to separate dissolved or dispersed materials from a solvent or a dispersing medium, generally water. This is accomplished because the membranes are selectively permeable to certain components of the mixture to be separated. Usually, water is the component to which such membranes are permeable. The separation process typically involves bringing an aqueous feed solution into contact with one surface of the membrane under pressure so as to effect permeation of the aqueous phase through the membrane while permeation of the dissolved or dispersed materials is prevented.

[0003] Both reverse osmosis and nanofiltration membranes usually have a discriminating layer fixed to a porous support and are referred to as composite membranes. The support provides physical strength but offers little resistance to the flow rate due to its porosity. On the other hand, the discriminating layer is less porous and provides for the rejection of the dissolved or dispersed materials. Therefore, it is generally the discriminating layer which determines the rejection rate, i.e., the percentage of the particular dissolved material that is rejected, and the flux, i.e., the flow rate at which solutions pass through the membrane.

[0004] Reverse osmosis membranes and nanofiltration membranes vary from each other with respect to their degree of impermeability to different ions and organic compounds. Reverse osmosis membranes are relatively impermeable to virtually all ions, including sodium chloride. Therefore, reverse osmosis membranes are widely used for the desalination of brackish water or seawater to provide relatively non-salty water for industrial, commercial, or domestic use because the rejection rate of NaCl for reverse osmosis membranes is usually from 95 to 100 percent.

[0005] On the other hand, nanofiltration membranes are usually more specific for the rejection of ions. Generally, nanofiltration membranes reject divalent ions, including radium, magnesium, calcium, and sulfate. In addition, nanofiltration membranes are generally impermeable to organic compounds having molecular weights above about 200. Additionally, nanofiltration membranes generally have higher fluxes than reverse osmosis membranes. These characteristics render nanofiltration membranes useful in such diverse applications as the "softening" of water and the removal of pesticides from water. As an example, nanofiltration membranes generally have a NaCl rejection rate of from 0 to 95 percent but have a relatively high rejection rate for salts such as magnesium sulfate and organic compounds such as atrazine.

[0006] Among particularly useful membranes for reverse osmosis and nanofiltration applications are those in which the discriminating layer is a polyamide. The polyamide discriminating layer for reverse osmosis membranes is often obtained by an interfacial polycondensation reaction between a polyfunctional aromatic amine and a polyfunctional acyl halide as described in, for example, US-A-4,277,344.

[0007] In contrast to reverse osmosis membranes, the polyamide discriminating layer for nanofiltration membranes is typically obtained via an interfacial polymerization between a piperazine or an amine substituted piperidine or cyclohexane and a polyfunctional acyl halide as described in US-A-4,769,148 and US-A-4,859,384. Another way of obtaining polyamide discriminating layers suitable for nanofiltration is via the methods described in, for example, US-A-4,765,897; US-A-4,812,270; and US-A-4,824,574. These patents describe changing a reverse osmosis membrane, such as those of US-A-4,277,344, into a nanofiltration membrane. The process requires contacting the reverse osmosis polyamide discriminating layer with a strong mineral acid such as phosphoric acid and then with a rejection enhancing agent such as tannic acid colloid. Unfortunately, the membranes of this process cannot be made in a continuous fashion. This is because if residual acid is present on the membranes then the membrane processing equipment, such as dryers, will be harmed.

[0008] In order for both reverse osmosis and nanofiltration composite membranes to be of commercial significance, it is desirable that said membranes have a reasonably high rejection characteristic for the dissolved or dispersed material being separated from the solvent, and have a high flux or flow rate at a reasonable transmembrane pressure. At higher fluxes, a greater volume of purified solvent may be obtained in the same amount of time without increasing the pressure. Thus, membranes having both a high rejection characteristic for a particular substance and a high flux are desirable for most applications.

[0009] Various treatments to polyamide membranes have been employed in order to increase their performance in water purification applications. US-A-4,634,531 discloses the treatment of membranes by contacting them with two kinds of very dilute aqueous solutions. The first solution is typically an amine. The second solution is an aldehyde. The treatment is cumbersome in that it requires the use of two different solutions. The result of the treatment is that the rejection capability of the membrane is increased somewhat but the flux is either hindered or unaffected. JP-A-02002827 contemplates treating polyamide reverse-osmosis membranes with a wide variety of watersoluble amino compounds. However, the treatment results in lower fluxes with the particular amines employed.

[0010] It would be advantageous if a treatment for polyamide discriminating layers could be found which would increase the flow rate therethrough without increasing the pressure or would maintain the flow rate therethrough when

the pressure is reduced. It would further be advantageous if the treatment involved a one-step application of a solution that is not corrosive.

[0011] It would further be advantageous if the rejection rate for particular ions could be controlled such that a reverse osmosis membrane could be changed into a nanofiltration membrane or a reverse osmosis membrane's flux could be increased while substantially maintaining the rejection rate for NaCl.

[0012] A one-step method of increasing the flux of a composite membrane having a polyamide discriminating layer has been discovered. The method consists essentially of contacting the discriminating layer with an amine from the group consisting of ammonia; ammonia substituted with one to three alkyl groups of one to two carbons which alkyl groups may be further substituted with one or more substituents selected from hydroxy, phenyl, or amino; butylamine; cyclohexylamine; 1,6-hexanediamine and mixtures thereof under conditions such that the aqueous flux of the membrane is increased at least 10 percent. The rejection rate and flux of a membrane prepared with the above-treated discriminating layers may be controlled by varying the amine, the concentration of the amine, the time of contact, the temperature of the contact and the pH of the amine solution. By controlling the rejection rate and flux, a reverse osmosis membrane may be converted into a nanofiltration membrane. A reverse osmosis membrane's flux may also be increased while substantially maintaining the rejection rate for NaCl.

[0013] Figure 1 shows the increase of flux in percent on the vertical axis after treatment with various amines (an untreated membrane control is shown as having 100 percent flux, i.e., the base line of the Y-axis is 0 (zero) which corresponds to the flux of the untreated membrane control.). Figure 2 shows the percent increase in salt, i.e., NaCl, passage (SP). The amines employed were trimethylamine (TMA), ethanolamine (EA), ammonia (NH₃), triethanolamine (TEA), TEA at a high pH of 14, dimethylamine (DMA), *N,N*-dimethyl ethanolamine (NNDMEA), methylamine (MA), and ethylenediamine (EDA).

[0014] As used herein "rejection rate" is the percentage of a particular dissolved material which does not flow through the membrane with the solvent. The rejection rate is equal to 100 minus the percentage of dissolved material which passes through the membrane, i.e., salt passage if the dissolved material is a salt.

[0015] As used herein "flux" is the flow rate at which aqueous solutions pass through the membrane.

[0016] As used herein "reverse osmosis membrane" is a membrane which has a rejection rate for NaCl of from 95 to 100 percent.

[0017] As used herein "nanofiltration membrane" is a membrane which has a rejection rate for NaCl of from 0 to 95 percent and has a rejection rate for at least one divalent ion or organic compound of from 90 to 100 percent.

[0018] As used herein "divalent ion" is an ion that has lost or gained two electrons and thus has an electric charge of (+2) or (-2). Such ions exist in water solutions upon the addition of inorganic salts. Examples of divalent ions include magnesium ions (Mg⁺²), calcium ions (Ca⁺²), radium ions (Ra⁺²) and sulfate ions (SO₄⁻²).

[0019] As used herein "organic compounds" denotes compounds containing carbon and having a molecular weight above 200 which may be rejected by a nanofiltration membrane. Examples of organic compounds include pesticides such as atrazine, monosaccharides such as glucose, chlorinated hydrocarbons, peptides, and soaps containing long chain hydrocarbons.

[0020] As used herein "polyamide" is a polymer in which amide linkages (-C(O)NH-) occur along the molecular chain.

[0021] Amines useful in this invention include substances such as ammonia optionally substituted with one to three alkyl groups of one to two carbons which alkyl groups may be further optionally substituted with one or more substituents selected from hydroxy, phenyl, or amino; butylamine; cyclohexylamine; 1,6-hexanediamine and mixtures thereof. Preferred substituted ammonia substances include those such as dimethylamine; trimethylamine; ethylamine; triethanolamine; *N,N*-dimethyl ethanolamine; ethylenediamine; and benzylamine.

[0022] It has been discovered that by contacting the above amines with the discriminating layer of reverse osmosis or nanofiltration composite membranes in which the discriminating layer comprises a crosslinked polyamide polymer, the aqueous flux is increased and the rejection rates for particular substances may be changed. Polyamide polymers useful as discriminating layers for reverse osmosis membranes are typically prepared by an interfacial polycondensation reaction between a polyfunctional aromatic amine and a polyfunctional acyl halide as described, for example, in US-A-4,277,344. Polyamide polymers useful as discriminating layers for nanofiltration membranes are typically prepared by an interfacial polymerization between a piperazine or an amine substituted piperidine or cyclohexane and a polyfunctional acyl halide as described in US-A-4,769,148 and US-A-4,859,384. Another method of preparing polyamide membranes suitable for nanofiltration is by modifying reverse osmosis membranes by the methods and procedures of US-A-4,765,897; US-A-4,812,270; and US-A-4,824,574. These patents involve contacting the reverse osmosis membrane with a strong mineral acid and then a rejection enhancing agent to form the nanofiltration membrane.

[0023] It is not particularly important when the polyamide discriminating layer is contacted with the amine so long as the polyamide discriminating layer has been formed. For instance, the contacting of the amine with the discriminating layer may be accomplished before the preparation of the discriminating layer into final membrane form. That is the contacting of the amine with the polyamide discriminating layer may be employed after the polyamide has been formed but before the support has been affixed. Likewise, the contacting of the amine can be done after the discriminating

layer is in its final composite membrane form, as in the case when the membrane is formed directly on the support. The contacting of the amine with the polyamide discriminating layer can even be employed after the composite membrane has been accomplished in a filtration operation as long as the membrane is still operable.

[0024] If the membrane is to be contacted after it is in final membrane form, then the shape and composition of the membrane should be such that the polyamide discriminating layer is capable of being contacted with the above-described amine compounds. A variety of membrane shapes are commercially available and useful in the present invention. These include spiral wound, hollow fiber, tubular, or flat sheet type membranes. In regard to the composition of the membrane, often the discriminating layer has hygroscopic polymers other than the polyamide coated upon the surface of the discriminating layer. Among these polymers are polymeric surfactants, polyvinyl alcohol, and polyacrylic acid. The presence of these polymers will generally not affect the invention so long as the amine and the polyamide discriminating layer come into contact.

[0025] Likewise, the material of construction of the porous support of the composite membrane is not critical to the invention. Any porous support that provides physical strength to the discriminating layer may be employed. Typical support materials that are known in the art include cellulose esters, polysulfones, polyether sulfones, polyvinyl chloride, chlorinated polyvinyl chloride, polystyrenes, polycarbonates, polyacrylonitriles, and polyesters. A particularly preferred class of support materials are polysulfones. Preparation of such supports are described in US-A-3,926,798; US-A-4,039,440; and US-A-4,277,344.

[0026] In most polyamide membranes, as the flux that the membrane is capable of increases, the rejection rate for ions decreases, i.e., the membrane becomes less selective. This invention may be used in this manner to convert a reverse osmosis membrane into a nanofiltration membrane. This is generally accomplished as disclosed below by contacting the discriminating layer with the disclosed amines under sufficient conditions, for example, for a long enough period of time and a high enough concentration, to increase the flux and alter the rejection rate. However, the invention may also be used to increase the aqueous flux of a reverse osmosis membrane and substantially maintain the rejection rate for NaCl, i.e., not lower the rejection rate for NaCl more than 10 percent, preferably not more than 5 percent, more preferably not more than 2 percent. This is accomplished via contacting the discriminating layer with the disclosed amines, but varying either the amine employed, the concentration, the time of contact, the temperature of contact, the pH, or combinations thereof from that used when changing a reverse osmosis membrane to a nanofiltration membrane. The general guidelines provided below will enable one skilled in the art to utilize the invention without undue experimentation to either change a reverse osmosis membrane to a nanofiltration membrane or increase the aqueous flux of a reverse osmosis membrane and substantially maintain the rejection rate for NaCl.

[0027] As mentioned above, the degree that the aqueous flux of the membrane is increased or enhanced may be controlled by varying the particular amine employed, the concentration of the amine, the time of contact between the discriminating layer and amine, the temperature of the contact, the pH of the amine solution, or combinations thereof. In general the above conditions should be such that the aqueous flux of the membrane is increased at least 10 percent, preferably at least 20 percent, most preferably at least 50 percent. As the aqueous flux is increased, the selectivity of the membrane may change, i.e., the membrane may allow univalent ions such as sodium to pass through the membrane at a higher rate while only rejecting divalent ions and organic compounds.

[0028] The amine used to treat the polyamide discriminating layer may be in solution, neat, or even a gas phase so long as it can be contacted with the polyamide. Gas phases may typically be employed for lower molecular weight amines such as ammonia, methylamine, and dimethylamine.

[0029] The solvent may be any solvent in which the amine is soluble so long as the flux enhancement and the performance of the membrane is not hindered by contact with the solvent. Typical solvents may include water and organic compounds such as alcohols and hydrocarbons provided the support is not dissolved by the solvent. Generally, because of its ease of handling and its availability, water is employed if a solvent is desired.

[0030] The extent that the aqueous flux of the membrane is enhanced when treated with the amines of this invention varies depending upon the particular amine employed. At least one general trend applies in most situations, however. The trend being that the more functional groups which are present on the amine, e.g., alcohol and/or amino groups, the greater the increase in flux.

[0031] Correspondingly, the concentration of the amine and time of contact are interrelated and effect the degree of aqueous flux enhancement. The minimum length of time that a particular amine is required to be contacted with the discriminating layer for an increase in aqueous flux depends to a great extent upon the concentration of the amine. Generally, the higher the concentration of the amine, the shorter the necessary length of contacting time to increase the aqueous flux. In most cases, the concentration of the amine should be at least 5, preferably at least 20, most preferably at least 50, to 100 percent by weight. The minimum time of contact can be from at least 15 seconds, preferably at least one minute, more preferably at least 30 minutes when contacted at ambient temperatures.

[0032] In general, the longer the time of contact and the higher the concentration of the amine, the greater the increase in aqueous flux. After a prolonged time of contact, the aqueous flux will reach its maximum increase and no longer increase. At this point, the membrane may be used or continued to be stored in the amine. The time to reach

the maximum increase varies depending upon the particular amine employed, the concentration of the amine, and the temperature of contact but is ascertainable by one skilled in the art without undue experimentation by utilizing the general trends disclosed above. For most amines and concentrations, the aqueous flux of the membrane will be maximized once the discriminating layer has been contacted for 5 days with the amine.

[0033] If it is desired to shorten the minimum length of time of contact, then the surface temperature of the polyamide discriminating layer may be increased. Although this applies generally, it is particularly advantageous if low concentrations of an amine which might require a long contacting time are being employed. Although temperatures from 0° to 30°C are most conveniently used, increased temperatures may shorten the necessary contacting time. The increased temperatures should not be so high that the membrane's performance is reduced, i.e., not above 130°C. Typical temperatures which will hasten the flux effect of the membrane are at from at least 30°C, preferably at least 60°C to 130°C, preferably 80°C. These temperatures may be reached by contacting the amine with the polyamide discriminating layer in a device such as an oven or a dryer in order to dry the discriminating layer. Typical ovens or dryers which may be employed include convection, infrared, or forced air dryers.

[0034] The pH of the amine solution to be contacted with the polyamide is not a critical aspect of the invention. However, the pH should not be so low that the particular amine being employed precipitates out of solution. On the other hand, the pH should not be so high that the polyamide discriminating layer is degraded or performance is negated. Preferably, a pH of 7 to 12 is useful in the method of the present invention and for some amines higher pHs may increase the degree of aqueous flux enhancement.

[0035] The method used to contact the amine with the discriminating layer may be any which allows the amine to become associated with the polyamide for a sufficient time to increase the aqueous flux. For instance, the polyamide may be partially or totally immersed or soaked in the amine or amine solution. The amine or amine solution may also be passed through, sprayed onto, or rolled onto the discriminating layer. Although the aforementioned methods may also be useful when the amine is a gas, the contacting of a gaseous amine with the discriminating layer is advantageously accomplished in a closed vessel to minimize the amount of amine employed.

EXAMPLES

Example 1

[0036] Reverse osmosis membranes (FT-30™ available from FilmTec Corporation) are contacted with triethanolamine of various aqueous concentrations at 60°C as shown in Table 1 for 1 hour. The membranes are then stored in water at room temperature until tested for flux, as measured in both gallons per foot per day (gfd) and liters per meter square per hour (L/m²-hr), and percent salt passage (100-rejection rate) using 2000 parts per million (ppm) aqueous sodium chloride (NaCl) solution and a transmembrane pressure of 225 pounds per square inch (psi) which is 1.55 MegaPascals (MPa). The results shown in Table 1.

Table I
Performance When Contacting With Different Concentrations of Triethanolamine (TEA) for 1 hour at 60°C

Treatment (volume Percent)	Flux gfd	Flux $\text{L/m}^2\text{-hr}$	Flux Std. Dev. gfd	Flux Std. Dev. $\text{L/m}^2\text{-hr}$	Percent Salt Pass.	Percent Salt Pass. Std. Dev.	Rejection Rate (Percent)
100% TEA	62.35	36.68	7.79	4.58	8.99	6.24	91.01
66% TEA	48.03	28.25	0.34	0.20	2.33	0.14	97.67
Starting Membrane	36.44	21.44	0.87	0.51	1.54	0.49	98.46

Example 2

[0037] Reverse osmosis membranes (FT-30™ available from FilmTec Corporation) are contacted with 100 percent triethanolamine at 60°C for various amounts of time as shown in Table 2. The membranes are then stored in water at room temperature until tested for flux and percent salt passage using a 2000 ppm aqueous NaCl solution and a trans-membrane pressure of 225 psi which is 1.55 MPa. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Performance When Contacted with 100 Percent Triethanolamine (TEA) for Different Amounts of Time at 60°C							
Length of Treatment	Flux gfd	Flux L/m ² -hr	Flux Std. Dev. gfd	Flux Std. Dev. L/m ² -hr	Percent Salt Pass.	Rejection Rate (%)	% Salt Pass. Std. Dev.
60 min.	61.54	36.20	3.17	1.86	1.75	98.25	0.12
40 Min.	60.11	35.36	4.58	2.70	1.98	98.02	0.47
20 min.	55.8	32.82	1.15	0.68	2.10	97.90	0.17
Starting Membrane	37.77	22.22	3.40	2.00	1.45	98.55	0.19

Example 3

[0038] Reverse osmosis membranes (FT-30™ available from FilmTec Corporation) are contacted with one molar solution of butylamine, cyclohexylamine, 1,6-hexane-diamine and benzylamine for five days at 25°C. Reverse osmosis membranes (FT-30™ available from FilmTec Corporation) are contacted with one molar solution of 1,6-hexanediamine and benzylamine for one day at 25°C. The above treated membranes are then stored in water at room temperature until tested for flux and percent salt passage using 2000 ppm aqueous NaCl solution and transmembrane pressure of 225 psi which is 1.55 MegaPascals (MPa). The results are shown in Table 3a and 3b

Table 3a - Five Days

		5 Days Flux gfd	5 Days Flux l/m ² - hr	Percent Salt Pass.	Rejection Rate	Percent of Initial Flux
Starting Membrane	Average	37.4905	22.0532	1.502	98.498	
	Std. Dev.	1.4095	0.8291	0.112		
Butyl amine	Average	48.3086	28.4168	2.766	97.234	128.86%
	Std. Dev.	3.77934	2.22314	0.124		
cyclo hexylamine	Average	51.4335	30.2550	4.931	95.069	137.19%
	Std. Dev.	5.32809	3.13417	0.349		
1,6-hexane diamine	Average	49.1316	28.9009	3.158	96.842	131.05%
	Std. Dev.	3.4174	2.0102	0.390		
Benzyl amine	Average	62.0229	36.4841	9.051	90.949	165.44%
	Std. Dev.	1.2882	0.7578	1.186		

Table 3b - One Day

		1 Day Flux g/d	1 Day Flux L/m ² -hr	Percent Salt Pass.	Rejection Rate
Starting Membrane	Average	36.2623	21.3308	1.07879	98.92121
	Std. Dev.	1.52969	0.89981	0.08724	
1,6-hexane diamine	Average	40.9509	24.0888	1.12219	98.7781
	Std. Dev.	2.92659	1.72152	0.02112	
Benzyl amine	Average	43.2974	25.4691	3.35476	96.64524
	Std. Dev.	4.40101	2.58882	0.09992	

Example 4

[0039] Reverse osmosis membranes (FT-30™ available from FilmTec Corporation) are contacted with 100 percent triethanolamine at 60°C for various amounts of time as shown in Table 4. The membranes are then tested for flux and percent passage using a 2000 ppm aqueous NaCl solution, a 1000 ppm aqueous MgSO₄ solution, a 0.5 percent aqueous glucose solution, and a transmembrane pressure of 120 psi which is 0.83 MegaPascals (MPa). The results are shown in Table 4

Table 4

Length of Treatment with TEA	NaCl Salt Pass.	NaCl Rejection Rate	Flux gfd	Flux L/m ² -hr	MgSO ₄ Salt Pass.	MgSO ₄ Rejection Rate	Glucose Pass.	Glucose Rejection Rate	Std. Dev. Glucose
10 min.	3.33%	96.67%	25.61976	15.07044	0.0%	100.0%	2.81%	97.19%	0.36%
10 min.	5.05%	94.95%	36.5628	21.5075	0.0%	100.0%	2.57%	97.43%	0.14%
30 min.	7.57%	92.43%	44.62176	26.24809	0.31%	99.69%	3.76%	96.24%	0.08%
30 min.	6.75%	93.25%	39.15984	23.03520	3.70%	96.30%	4.95%	95.05%	0.22%
120 min.	11.91%	88.09%	54.29148	31.93616	0.26%	99.74%	4.90%	95.10%	0.08%
120 min.	13.22%	86.78%	55.4616	32.6245	0.0%	100.0%	2.81%	97.19%	0.16%
Starting Membrane	3.31%	96.69%	23.68992	13.93524	0.70%	99.30%	3.28%	96.72%	0.29%
Starting Membrane	3.15%	96.85%	22.50492	13.23819	1.12%	98.88%	11.64%	88.32%	0.12%

Example 5

[0040] A nanofiltration membrane (NF-45™ available from FilmTec Corporation) is contacted with 100 percent tri-ethanolamine at 60°C for one hour. The membrane is then stored in water at room temperature until tested for flux and percent salt passage using a 2000 ppm aqueous NaCl solution and a transmembrane pressure of 1.55 MPa (225 psi). The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

		Flux	Flux L/m ² -hr	% Salt Pass.	Rejection Rate
starting membrane	Average	44.8122	26.3601	32.777	67.223
	Std. Dev.	1.71086	1.00639	20.241	
TEA at 60°C 1 hr.	Average	94.6887	55.6992	33.194	66.806
	Std. Dev.	13.5823	7.9896	3.864	

Example 6

[0041] Reverse osmosis membranes (FT-30™ available from FilmTec Corporation) are contacted with the various solutions as mentioned in Table 6 for 20 minutes at 90°C. Each of the three membranes is then tested to determine the rejection rate of atrazine, magnesium sulfate (MgSO₄), calcium chloride (CaCl₂), and sodium chloride (NaCl) using the transmembrane pressures and concentrations listed in Table 6. The results are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

	130 psi (.90 MPa)				130 psi (.90 MPa) CaCl ₂ 300 ppm			250 psi (1.7 MPa) 2000 ppm NaCl		
	10 ppm Atrazine Rejection rate %	2000 ppm MgSO ₄ Rejection Rate %	Flux (gfd)	Flux L/m ² - hr.	Rejection Rate percent	Flux (gfd)	Flux L/m ² - hr	Rejection Rate percent	Flux (gfd)	Flux L/m ² -hr
4% NaOH, 70% TEA, pH 13.25	74.5, 68.3	99.6, 99.6	68.5, 60.8	40.3, 35.8	93.6, 95.9	113, 128	66.5, 75.3	69.9, 66.3	126, 141	74.1, 82.9
18% NaOH, 70% TEA, pH 12.55	85.8, 85.1	99.6, 99.6	56.8, 56.3	33.4, 33.1	98.1, 98.4	105, 105	61.8, 61.8	80.92, 79	115, 113	67.6, 66.5
100% TEA, pH 10.44	91.6, 93.2	99.6, 99.9	48.7, 47.9	28.6, 28.2	99.2, 98.5	94.2, 88.5	55.4, 52.1	87.8, 86.5	96, 103	56.5, 60.6

Example 7

[0042] Reverse osmosis membranes (FT-30 available from FilmTec Corporation) are contacted with a 50 percent solution of triethanol amine (TEA) for 20 minutes at both 50°C and 70°C as shown in Table 7. The average flux and average rejection rate as measured with a transmembrane pressure of 1.04 MPa (150 psi) and a 2000 ppm, NaCl solution are shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7

	Flux (gfd)	Flux (L/m ² -hr)	Rejection Rate NaCl
50°C	29.09	17.11	98%
70°C	49.23	28.96	89%

Claims

1. A method of increasing the aqueous flux of a composite membrane having a polyamide discriminating layer which consists essentially of contacting the discriminating layer with an amine from the group consisting of ammonia; ammonia substituted with one to three alkyl groups of one to two carbons, said alkyl groups may be further substituted with one or more substituents selected from hydroxy, phenyl, or amino groups; butylamine; cyclohexylamine; 1,6-hexane diamine and mixtures thereof under conditions such that the aqueous flux is increased at least 10 percent.
2. The method of Claim 1 wherein the amine is ammonia; dimethylamine; trimethylamine; ethylamine; triethanolamine; N,N-dimethyl ethanolamine; ethylenediamine; benzylamine; or mixtures thereof.
3. The method of Claim 2 wherein the amine is triethanolamine.
4. The method of any of Claims 1 to 3 wherein the discriminating layer is contacted with the amine for a period of from 15 seconds to 5 days.
5. The method of one or more of Claims 1 to 4 wherein the discriminating layer is contacted with the amine at a temperature of from 0°C to 130°C.
6. The method of one or more of Claims 1 to 5 wherein the discriminating layer is dried at a temperature of from 60° to 80°C after contact with the amine.
7. The method of one or more of Claims 1 to 6 wherein the pH of the amine is from 7 to 12.
8. The method of one or more of Claims 1 to 7 wherein the composite membrane is a reverse osmosis membrane or a nanofiltration membrane.
9. The method of one or more of Claims 1 to 7 wherein the composite membrane is a reverse osmosis membrane and the conditions are such that the reverse osmosis membrane is changed to a nanofiltration membrane.
10. The method of one or more of Claims 1 to 7 wherein the composite membrane is a reverse osmosis membrane and the conditions are such that the rejection rate is substantially maintained.

Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren zur Erhöhung des wässrigen Flusses einer Verbundmembran, die eine Polyamidtrennschicht hat, welches im wesentlichen aus dem Inkontaktbringen der Trennschicht mit einem Amin aus der Gruppe besteht, die aus Ammoniak, mit einem bis drei Alkylgruppen von einem bis zwei Kohlenstoffatomen substituierten Ammoniak, wobei diese Alkylgruppen weiter mit einem oder mehreren Substituenten, ausgewählt aus Hydroxy-, Phenyl- oder Aminogruppen, substituiert sein können, Butylamin, Cyclohexylamin, 1,6-Hexandiamin und Mischungen hiervon besteht, unter solchen Bedingungen, daß der wässrige Fluß wenigstens 10 % erhöht wird.

2. Verfahren nach Anspruch 1, bei welchem das Amin Ammoniak, Dimethylamin, Trimethylamin, Ethylamin, Triethanolamin, N,N-Dimethylethanolamin, Ethylendiamin, Benzylamin oder Mischungen hiervon ist.
3. Verfahren nach Anspruch 2, bei welchem das Amin Triethanolamin ist.
4. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, bei welchem die Trennschicht mit dem Amin für eine Zeitspanne von 15 Sekunden bis 5 Tagen in Kontakt gebracht wird.
5. Verfahren nach einem oder mehreren der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, bei welchem die Trennschicht mit dem Amin bei einer Temperatur von 0°C bis 130°C in Kontakt gebracht wird.
6. Verfahren nach einem oder mehreren der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, bei welchem die Trennschicht bei einer Temperatur von 60°C bis 80°C nach dem Kontakt mit dem Amin getrocknet wird.
7. Verfahren nach einem oder mehreren der Ansprüche 1 bis 6, bei welchem der pH des Amins von 7 bis 12 beträgt.
8. Verfahren nach einem oder mehreren der Ansprüche 1 bis 7, bei welchem die Verbundmembran ein Umkehrosmosemembran oder eine Nanofiltrationsmembran ist.
9. Verfahren nach einem oder mehreren der Ansprüche 1 bis 7, bei welchem die Verbundmembran ein Umkehrosmosemembran ist und die Bedingungen derart sind, daß die Umkehrosmosemembran zu einer Nanofiltrationsmembran umgewandelt ist.
10. Verfahren nach einem oder mehreren der Ansprüche 1 bis 7, bei welchem die Verbundmembran eine Umkehrosmosemembran ist und die Bedingungen derart sind, daß die Zurückweisungsrate im wesentlichen beibehalten wird.

Revendications

1. Procédé pour augmenter le flux aqueux d'une membrane composite présentant une couche discriminante de polyamide, qui comprend essentiellement la mise en contact de la couche discriminante avec une amine choisie dans l'ensemble constitué par l'ammoniac ; l'ammoniac portant comme substituant un à trois groupes alkyle qui comportent de 1 à 2 atomes de carbone, lesdits groupes alkyle pouvant porter en outre un ou plusieurs substituants choisis parmi les groupes hydroxy, phényle et amino ; la butylamine ; la cyclohexylamine ; la 1,6-hexanediamine et leurs mélanges dans des conditions telles que le flux aqueux est augmenté d'au moins 10 %.
2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, dans lequel l'amine est l'ammoniac, la diméthylamine, la triméthylamine, l'éthylamine, la triéthanolamine, la N,N-diméthyléthanolamine, l'éthylènediamine, la benzylamine ou leurs mélanges.
3. Procédé selon la revendication 2, dans lequel l'amine est la triéthanolamine.
4. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans lequel on met la couche discriminante en contact avec une amine pendant une durée de 15 secondes à 5 jours.
5. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, dans lequel on met la couche discriminante en contact avec une amine à une température allant de 0 °C à 130 °C.
6. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, dans lequel on fait sécher la couche discriminante à une température allant de 60 °C à 80 °C après le contact avec l'amine.
7. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 6, dans lequel le pH de l'amine va de 7 à 12.
8. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 7, dans lequel la membrane composite est une membrane d'osmose inverse ou une membrane de nanofiltration.
9. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 7, dans lequel la membrane composite est une membrane d'osmose inverse et les conditions sont telles que la membrane d'osmose inverse est changée en une membrane

de nanofiltration.

10. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 7, dans lequel la membrane composite est une membrane d'osmose inverse et les conditions sont telles que le taux de rejet est pratiquement maintenu.

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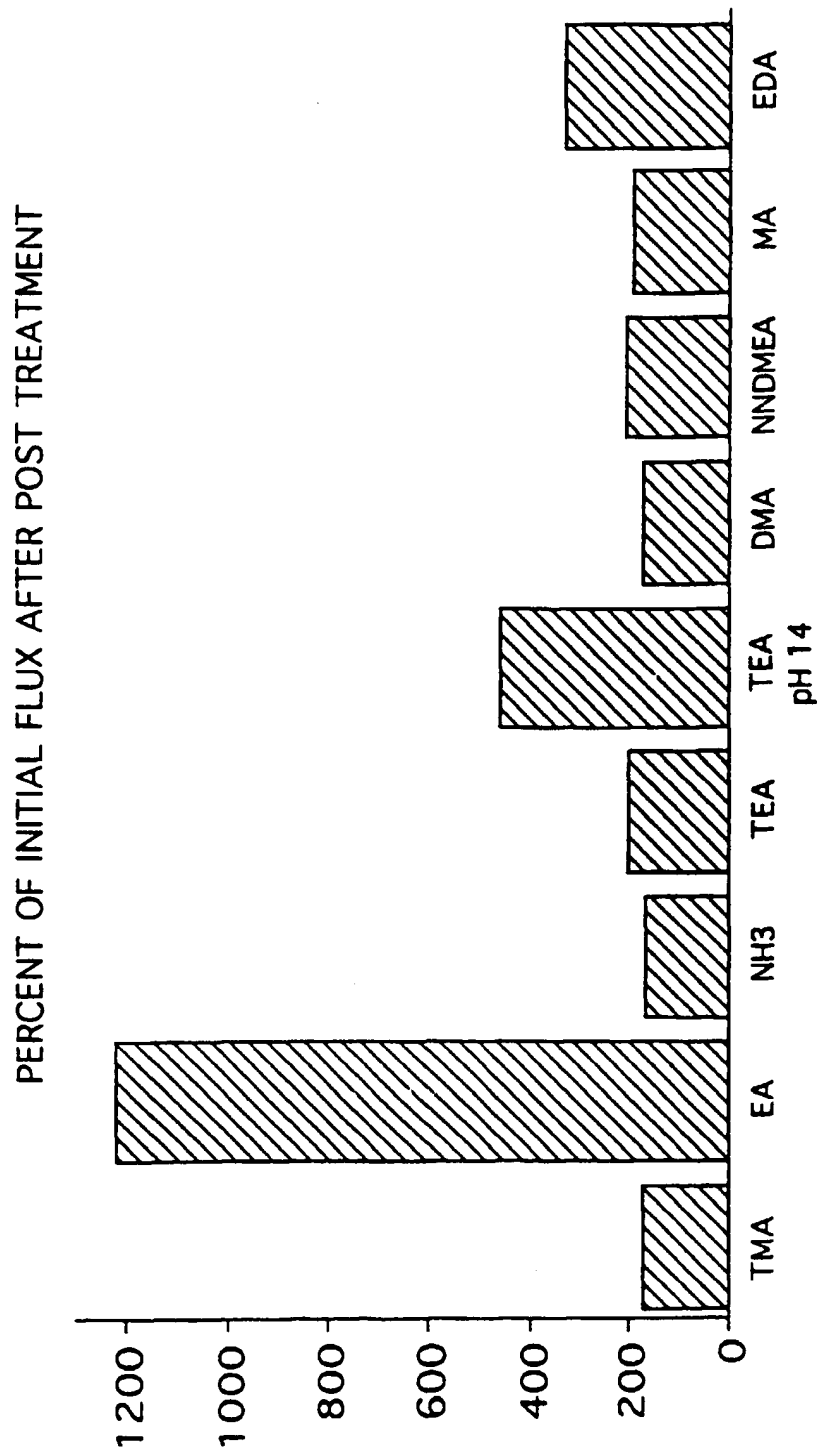


FIG. 1

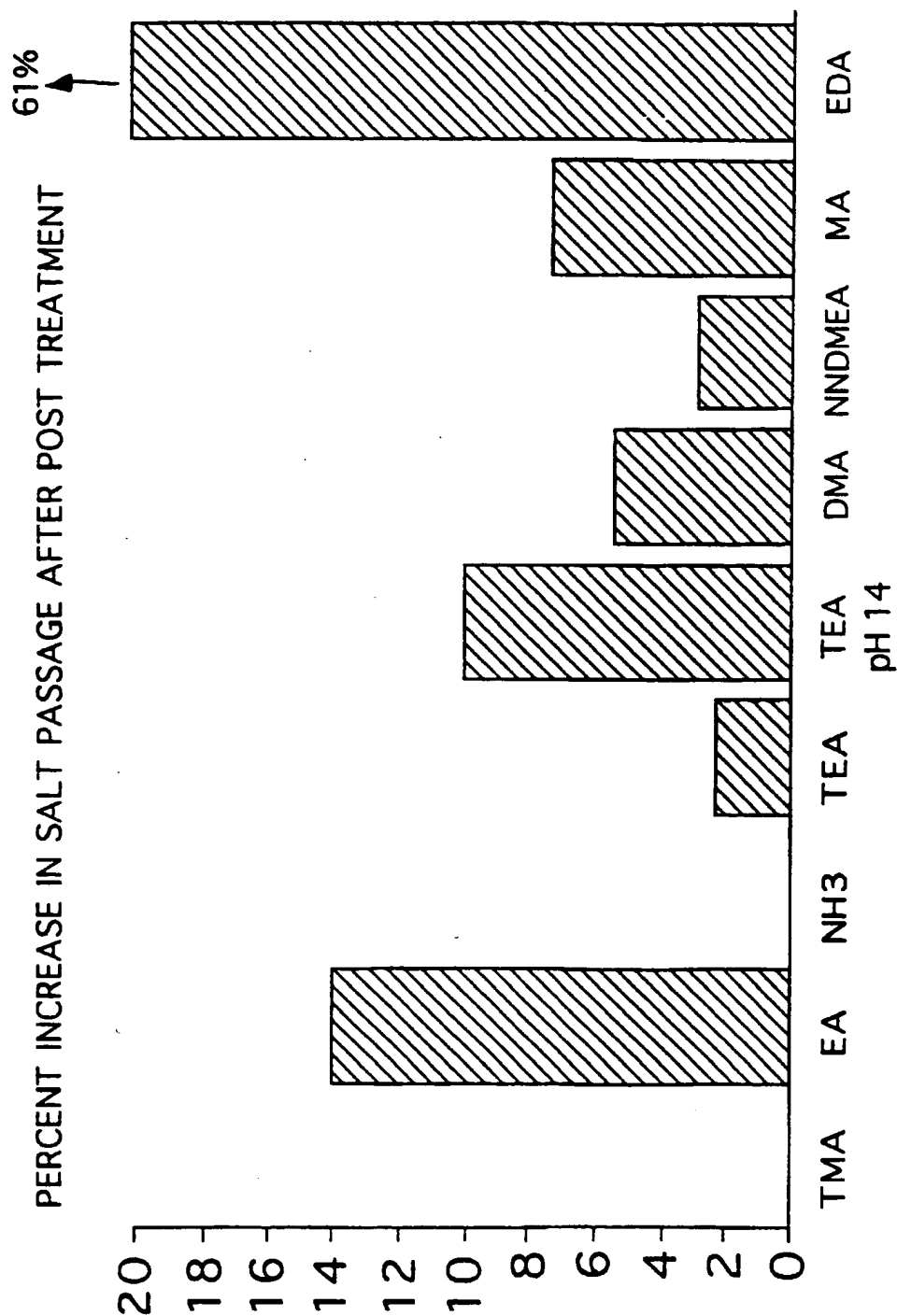


FIG. 2